Purchase of paint by Defence Department

*256. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Paint Association (IPA) has urged the Government to set up a Task Force to evaluate and redefine the Department's purchase from the industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have called for any bids for supply of imported paints; and

(d) the details of annual consumption of indigenous paint by defence?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) The Indian Paints Association in their 42nd Annual General Meeting held in Kolkata on 11.7.2005 have requested the setting up of a task force comprising of the paint industry and the defence personnel to review and specify standards for paints used by the Defence Forces.

Indian Navy and Ordnance Factory Board have taken procurement action for importing small quantities of very specialized paints.

Annual consumption of indigenous paints directly procured by Army, Navy and Ordance Factory Bord is estimated to be about 29 lakh litres.

Fuel scam in the army

*257. SHRI DATTA MEGHE:
DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether soldiers deployed in Ladakh region are dependent on Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) for bulk supplies of petrol, diesel and kerosene delivered in IOC tankers directly to Leh;

(b) if so, whether these tankers come to Leh from IOC depots at Ambala;

(c) whether recently it was unearthed that agents engaged for supply of oil from IOC were delivering tankers full of water to forward bases instead of oil;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the matter has been inquired into;

(f) if so, the details and outcome thereof; and

(g) the action taken against persons found involved in this malpractice and fraud?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (g) The soldiers deployed in the Ladakh region are dependent on the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) for supplies of petrol, diesel and kerosene which are delivered from Ambala to Leh in Bulk Petroleum Lorries (BPLs) by the IOC.

12 BPLs were dispatched from the IOC Depot at Ambala on 11th July, 2005. These lorries failed to reach the Field petroleum Depot, Leh on 16th July, 2005. A search for the missing lorries was organized by the Army authorities on 17th July, 2005 and 7 of the 12 BPLs were spotted in the Leh market. Their quality and quantity were checked by an independent Board of officers and it was discovered that all the 7 BPLs contained water instead of the required petroleum product. An FIR has been lodged with the Civil Police by the Army authorities. The drivers of these vehicles are in custody of the Civil Police, who are investigating the matter.

A court of Inquiry has been ordered by the Army authorities which is in progress. On receipt of the findings of the Court of Inquiry, necessary action will be taken.

Joint ventures in tea, coffee and agriculture related sectors

*258. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether several countries have sought participation in Joint Ventures in sectors like tea, coffee and other agriculture related sectors;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and